1801-1976

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Exterior of St. Luke's Church on William Street. Picture taken in 1956.

CATSKILL, NEW YORK

PREFACE

In preparing the history of St. Luke's, we have decided to present first a few facts about its early history. Then an account of the construction of the various church edifices including the present rectory.

You will find a section devoted to early rectors, a section devoted to bequests and memorials, with some comment on church finances of former years and a brief discussion of the more recent period of the church.

We are indebted to Ruth Lindsay for the pictures of the interior of the old church on Church Street and of the interior of the present church. We are indebted to Harriet C. Chadderdon for the picture of the exterior of the old church on Church Street and of the adjoining school building.

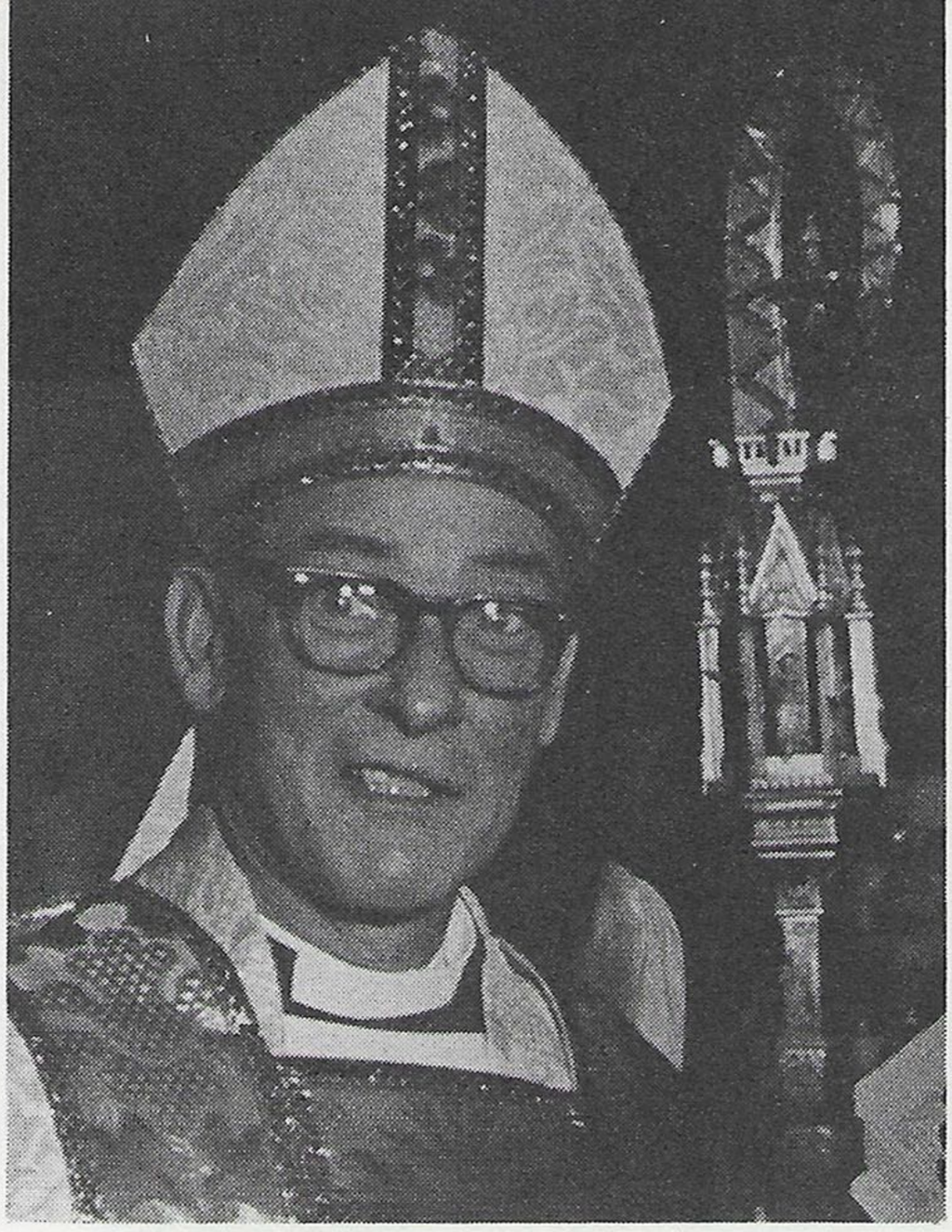
It is rather a frustrating experience to wirte a church history. There is no way you can record the really important events. A Christian church is a group of people professing their faith and trying with more or less success to worship their God and to live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Church records give no clue to the emotions of the people and their efforts to lead constructive lives in the community. You do not find any hint of the various personal problems, no mention of the things about which they prayed. You find no reference to the agonies of the several wars in which the Country has engaged during the period St. Luke's has been in existence and no record of the anxieties and separations caused in the community by such wars.

We find from the minutes of the Vestry and from the clippings which have been saved from local papers, that the church has had its ups and downs through the years, that it had many of the same problems which we have today and that the parishioners struggled along in somewhat the same manner we are doing now.

The Bicentennial Committee of St. Luke's

November 1, 1976



DIOCESE OF ALBANY
62-68 SOUTH SWAN STREET
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12210
TELEPHONES HO 5-4737, HO 5-4738

THE RT. REV. WILBUR E. HOGG
BISHOP
THE RT. REV. CHARLES B. PERSELL, JR., S.T.D.
SUFFRAGAN BISHOP

21 October 1976

St. Luke's Parish
William Street
Catskill, New York 12414

Dear Friends and Fellow-workers in the Gospel:

With great joy and thanksgiving I greet you at the 175th Anniversary of the founding of St. Luke's Parish in Catskill.

While these occasions are truly times of grateful remembering, I know that I need not tell you that Christians are particularly called to be forward looking, full of enthusiasm and expectation. Building upon a great past, my prayer for you at this time is for God's blessing upon a still greater future.

May Christ Jesus, our Lord, continue to pour out his grace upon you!

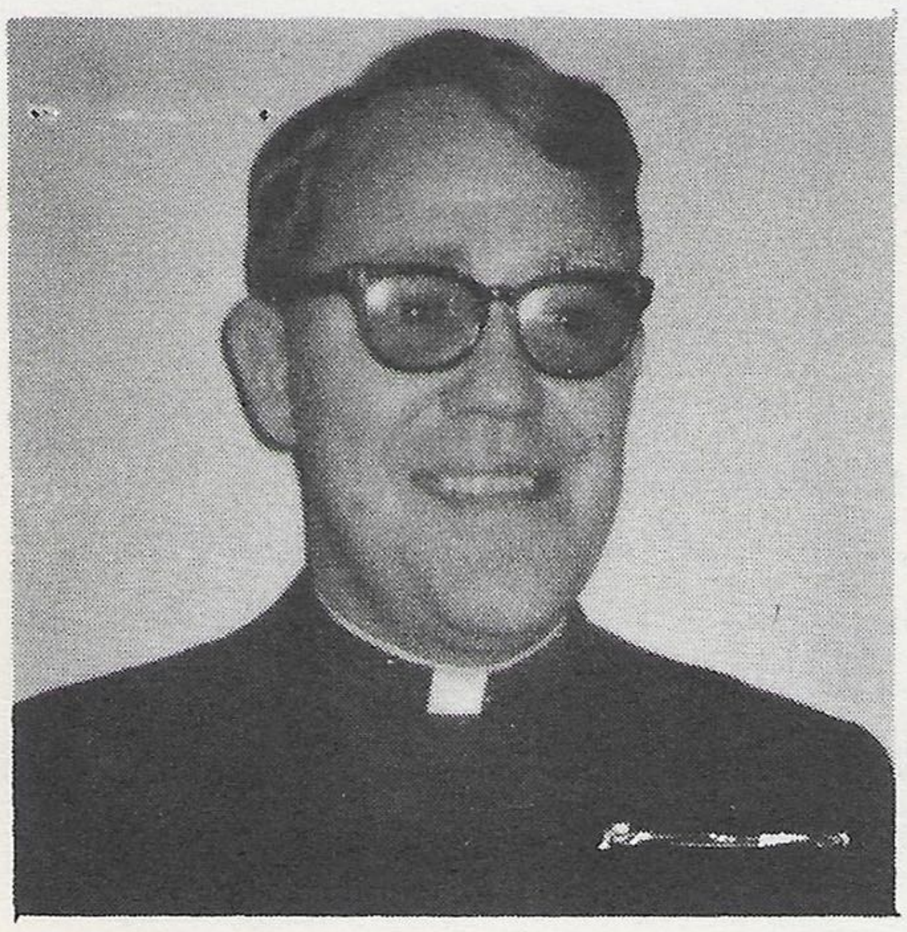
Faithfully yours in Christ,

+Wilbur E. Hogg

Wilbur E. Hogg
Bishop of Albany

WEH:f+

St. Luke's Church, 50 WILLIAM STREET, CATSKILL, NEW YORK



November 1976

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I salute you on the 175th anniversary of St. Luke's parish in Catskill. I give thanks to God that I have had the privilege of serving as your Priest for the past eight years. We have grown in the love of our Lord and I pray God that we will continue to grow in His grace and service in the years to come.

With joy I recognize our present fellowship. With respect to our past and with confidence in our future, I commend you to the Keeping of Almighy God.

Yours in Christ,

Philip B. Gausby+

The Rev. Philip B. Gausby
Rector

HISTORY OF ST. LUKE'S CHURCH
CATSKILL, NEW YORK

There was a group of Episcopalians in Catskill before 1800, according to two certificates made by Robert G. Wetmore, who styles himself a minister of the Episcopal Church and an itinerant missionary in the Episcopal Church. He baptized Brandt DuBois at Catskill on May 9, 1798, and Eliza Scott at Catskill on January 4, 1798, both according to the due and prescribed order of the Protestant Episcopal Church and in the presence of divers witnesses.

In the Bi-centennial Year of our country, the parish of St. Luke's, Catskill, New York, celebrates its 175th anniversary, the parish being only 25 years younger than our country.

A meeting was held to establish a parish on August 24, 1801. The minutes of the first meeting are printed in full.

"Agreeable to legal notice a number of the inhabitants of the town of Catskill convened for the purpose of electing proper officers for the regulation of a Protestant Episcopal Church in this town, agreeable to an act of the Legislature of the State of New York, entitled, "An act for the relief of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New York," passed the seventeenth day of March, 1795.

The Rev. Ammie Rogers, A.M., in the chair.

Abijah H. Beach, Secretary.

Resolved: That Dr. Thomas Thomson and Maj. Samuel Haight be the wardens for said church.

Resolved: That Caleb Benton, Jonathan Booth, John Andrews, John V.D.S. Scott, John Blanchard, Frederick Chollett, Soloman Chandler, and Isaac Nichols be the vestrymen of the said church.

Resolved: That Tuesday in Easter Week shall hereafter be the day to elect the wardens and vestrymen, annually.

Resolved: That this said society or church shall hereafter be known by the name, style, and title of "The Rector, Wardens, and Vestrymen of St. Luke's Church, in Catskill."

ABIJAH H. BEACH, Secretary

To gain historical perspective, it may be well to tie the date of August 24th, 1801 in with other dates in the history of our country. George Washington had been dead for only one year, eight months and seven days. Our third president, Thomas Jefferson, was in office. The Louisiana Purchase was two years, two months and one day in the future. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were to live for nearly another twenty-five years. The War of 1812 did not

occur for almost another 11 years. The Monroe Doctrine would not be expressed until 22 years later and the beginning of the Civil War was still 59 years down the road of the future.

At a vestry meeting on August 31, 1801, Edward W. Laight and Peter Stuyvesant, Jr. of New York City were appointed delegates to represent the Parish in the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the State of New York to be held in New York City. We wonder if he were a descendant of *the* Peter Stuyvesant and we also wonder how a Dutchman happened to be a delegate at an Anglican Convention.

On September 26, 1802, Richard Bradford was appointed Rector of St. Luke's Parish. The wardens were directed to write to the Right Rev. Bishop Moore and advise him of the appointment. Apparently, vestries were very powerful in those days.

By pledge dated March 8, 1802, 48 persons subscribed for contributions for the Rector's salary for one year. Seventeen of those who pledged paid nothing and eleven less than they had pledged. There is nothing new under the sun.

Among those who signed the subscription was one Joel Weed. He was the father of Thurlow Weed, publisher, political boss extraordinary and manager of William Seward's Campaign for the Republican nomination for the Presidency for 1860. Seward, of course, lost the nomination to Abraham Lincoln.

From its organization on August 24, 1801, until 1804, the congregation worshipped in a school house on Thompson Street.

CHURCHES AND BUILDINGS

On January 29, 1803, the vestry appointed a committee of five "with discretionary and ample powers" to make the necessary arrangements for making appropriations for donations, etc. towards building a church in the village of Catskill.

Resolution adopted April 12, 1803 directing that a petition be prepared asking the vestry of Trinity Church, New York City, to make a donation to the vestry of St. Luke's Church, Catskill, to enable them to build a church.

The minutes of the May 10th, 1803 meeting reported in substance that a variety of conversation was entered into and some buying proposed, but no decision was made. It may be observed that could be an accurate report of the meetings of many organizations at the present time.

At a meeting of the rector, wardens, and vestrymen of the St. Luke's church in Catskill, held May 16, 1803:

"Present: The Rev. Richard Bradford, rector; Thomas Thompson, warden; Caleb Benton, John Blanchard, Isaac Nichols, Frederick Chollet, Stephen Root, John V.D.S. Scott, Thomas O.H. Croswell, Terence Donnelly, vestrymen.

Resolved that a committee be appointed to confer with the proprietors of the different lots of ground that are in contemplation to build a church on in this village, and that Mr. Scott, Mr. Van Loan, and Mr. Nichols be said committee.

After a conference being had the committee reported that in their opinion the lot offered by Dr. Benton is worth three hundred dollars, and that it can be obtained for that sum.

Resolved: To accept the above report.

Resolved: That three persons be appointed as agents to superintend the building of a church; that they make out a subscription for that purpose and circulate it in this and the adjacent towns.

Resolved: That Dr. Benton, Maj. Haight, and Capt. Van Loan be said committee or agents, and that they also exhibit to the vestry, at their next meeting, a plan of the intended building and an estimate of the probable expense."

One item of considerable concern at vestry meetings in the year 1803 was the number of aisles and types of pews such church should have. First choice was for three aisles, then it was decided there should be two aisles with two front circular pews and no other pews but seats. The next meeting of the vestry held five days later, rescinded so much of the resolution as provided for two aisles and circular pews and adopted a resolution that there be three aisles and that one be a center aisle. A vestry meeting held 9 days later on October 3, 1803, provided that the side pews be square and that there be eight on each side.

This appears to have been the final decision relative to aisles and pews since we find nothing further on this subject in the minutes.

Trinity Church in New York City gave $2,000.00 toward the expense of building the church.

The corner stone was laid by Messrs. Samuel Haight, Caleb Benton, Thomas Thompson and Isaac Van Loan in 1803. The society asked these men to lay the cornerstone in recognition of their liberal donations to the building fund.

The granddaughter of Isaac Van Loan, Miss Jane Van Loan, erected the spire on the present church and the Rev. Thomas Cole of Saugerties, who preached the sermon at evening prayer on June 4, 1899, was a great grandson of Dr. Thomas Thompson.

The terms of the pledge by Trinity Church provided that the second one thousand dollars was not to be paid until the church was finished. Dr. Caleb Benton advanced one thousand dollars to be repaid to him when Trinity Church paid said balance of its pledge.

At its meeting on July 26, 1804, the vestry issued a certificate to be delivered to Trinity Church certifying that the church was completed and services were being held in it.

It is reported in the Examiner of February 8, 1873, that the Dutch Reformed Society held their meetings in St. Luke's on Sunday afternoons prior to the time when their church was completed.

The building was brick with a wooden steeple. It was the first church edifice erected in the present village of Catskill. Of course, the Reformed Church in Old Catskill, now Leeds, antedated it by many years.

The tablet in the present St. Luke's Church says that this first church was consecrated in 1807. Walton Van Loan, long time treasurer of the church,

says that the records of the diocese of New York shows that the church was consecrated on September 3, 1809.

The first church was destroyed by fire on September 11, 1839. The Catskill Recorder of September 12, 1839, said, "at half past 12 o'clock yesterday, the Episcopal church, a brick building, was discovered to be on fire, and in the course of an hour and a half was entirely consumed. The fire is supposed to have originated from sparks from J. C. Peck's machine shop adjoining the church. We are informed that it was insured for $3,000.00, which will not near cover the loss."

Notice dated September 12, 1839, mailed to North American Fire Insurance Company, advised that the church was destroyed by fire on the previous day and that it was insured in the company for $3,000.00.

Following the fire, the congregation of St. Luke's worshipped in the Methodist Church. The Dutch Reformed, Presbyterian and Methodist all promptly offered their churches to St. Luke's.

Plans for the second church were drawn soon after the fire by the famous artist, Thomas Cole, who was a member of the congregation and of the building committee.

Minutes of the vestry meeting of March 27, 1840, show that the following bids were received for building the new church: $4522.47, $4500.00, $4395.00, $4296.00, $3925.00, $3896.00, $3840.00, and $3745.00.

It was reported at the vestry meeting of May 28, 1840 that $1018.00 had been raised for the purpose of erecting a church.

A resolution was adopted at this meeting that the vestry enter into a contract with one Mr. Farrell for building a church.

The second church was built on the site of the first church and is presently a part of the Amos Post building on Church Street. This was a brick building which was completed in the early part of 1841. The records of the Journal of the 1841 Convention of the diocese of New York show that it was consecrated on August 10, 1841. This building had side galleries and the pulpit was behind the Altar and entered by a door from the rear.

The church again caught fire in 1855, caused by a spark from a planing mill next door and was considerably damaged. The vestry bought the planing mill lot and added it to the church property as a precaution against having fire start from this source a third time.

The Rev. Thomas Richey became Rector in 1854. As a result of the fire, extensive alterations were made in the interior of the church and the side galleries were removed.

The building again caught fire on January 7, 1877 from a gas light which was too near a Christmas wreath. The insurance company paid $500.00 on the loss and the vestry added more to this amount and made quite extensive decorations in the church.

In his address at one of the meetings celebrating the opening of the church, Walton Van Loan, long time treasurer and active churchman of the parish, noted that when he was in California his mother wrote to him on November 3, 1854, that the Rector, Mr. Richey, "was more desirous of having a new church than a parsonage and that a new church was beginning to be

Interior of St. Luke's Church on Church Street, consecrated in 1841. Plan of the edifice by Thomas Cole, also painting behind the Pulpit. Last service in this church was June 4, 1899.

thought of." This is the first reference we have been able to find to any discussion of the building of the present St. Luke's.

On December 1, 1871, Mr. Van Loan, as treasurer of the church, received a check for $1,000.00 from Henry Meiggs, who had attended St. Luke's as a boy and who in 1871 was a builder of railroads in South America. The purpose of the gift was for the construction of a new church.

The Rev. Robert Weeks was elected Rector on October 7, 1867. He was a young man at that time and wanted to build a parish school on the lot next to the church.

At the parish meeting of March 30, 1869, the question of building a school on the lot next to the church was discussed.

The vestry meeting of April 5, 1869, adopted a resolution that the Rector be granted permission to erect a school building on the lot adjacent to the church. The resolution also provided that, if the vestry did not pay expenses for erecting such a building, the Rector might remove it.

The school program never caught on and on May 11, 1870, the vestry authorized conveyance of church building to the Rector.

St. Luke's Church, Church Street, Catskill, (1899). Parish School at right, built in 1870's by Rev. Robert Weeks at his own expense. Building was later purchased by the Women of St. Luke's.

The Rector notified the vestry on April 22, 1874, that if the opportunity presented itself, he would sell his school building.

Ladies Sewing Society made arrangements with the vestry to pay the Society $100.00 rent per annum for the school building for a period not to exceed five years. Ladies would use rent money to purchase the building and give it to thethe church.

Finally, in the minutes of the vestry meeting April 17, 1899, it was resolved that the Sunday School building and lot be sold to Harry B. Morris for $1350.00.

The Rev. Robert Weeks in his sermon at the last service held in the old St. Luke's Church on Sunday morning, June 4, 1899, made the following allusion to the school building affair.

. . . . After speaking of money raised by the Ladies Sewing Society, the preacher continued, "part of it also, along back in the seventies went to the relief of a then young clergyman, the rector, who in his misdirected enthusiasm in the cause of church education erected at his own cost the Parish School building, whereof the holy women aforesaid were under no obligation to re-

lieve him, but of which nevertheless they did relieve him when his experiment collapsed with anything but ideal results. If anybody had reason to think of the Women of St. Luke's as holy women, and call them so, that rector had it, and it may not be surprising to you if he tells you he still feels in the same way!"

The outstanding event of this parish was the erection of the present stone church edifice on William Street during the 1890's. It is the most completely documented occurrence since clippings from both the Recorder and Examiner, the Village newspapers of the day are found in the minute book.

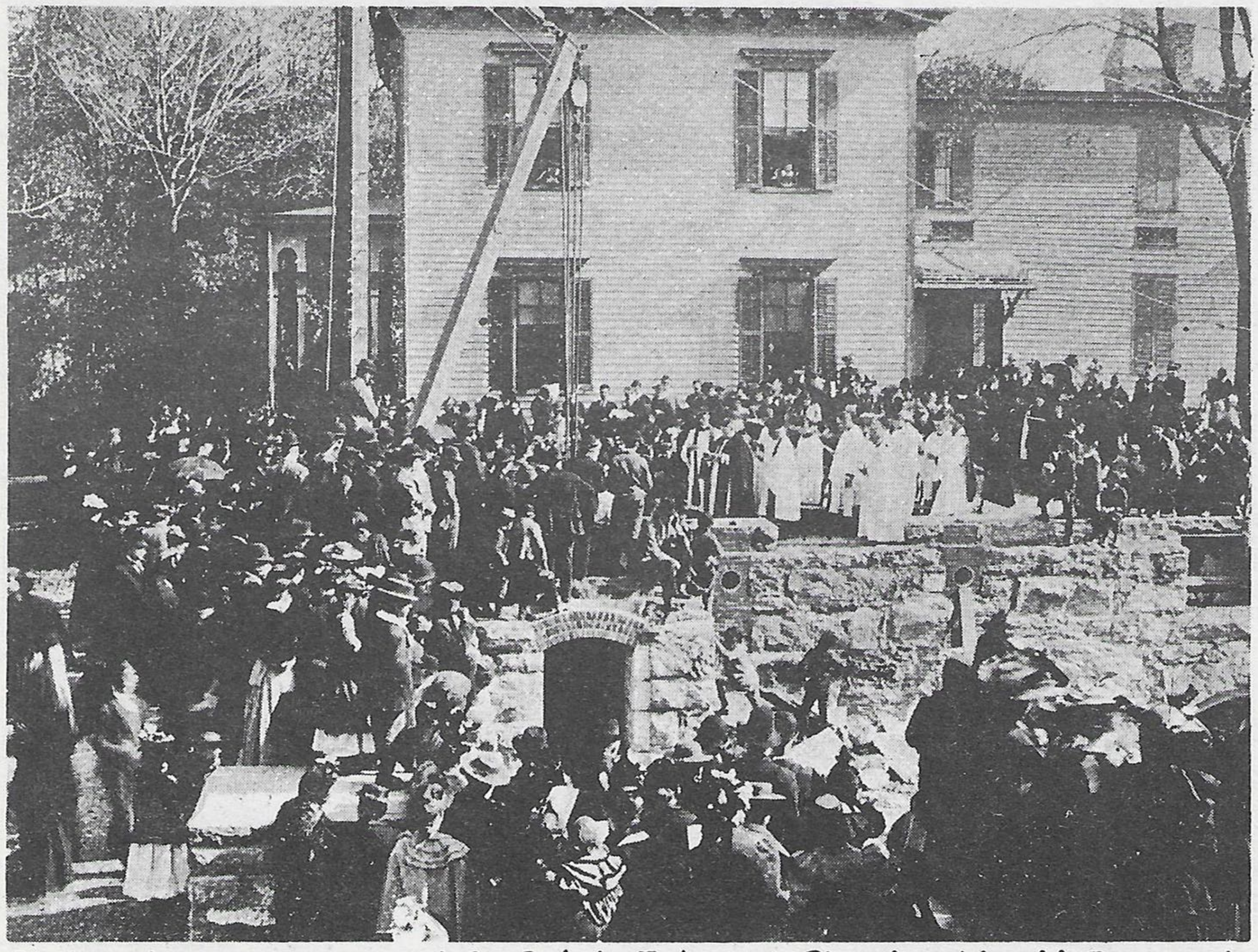
The building of a new church is first officially mentioned in the vestry minutes of the meeting of November 9, 1891. It is recorded that Mr. Schofield offered to exchange his property on William Street for the Rectory and lot plus the lot on the corner of Liberty and King Streets, then owned by the church.

A parish meeting was called and held on Tuesday, December 1, 1891 to consider this matter which resulted in a vote of 85 for the exchange and 10 against it.

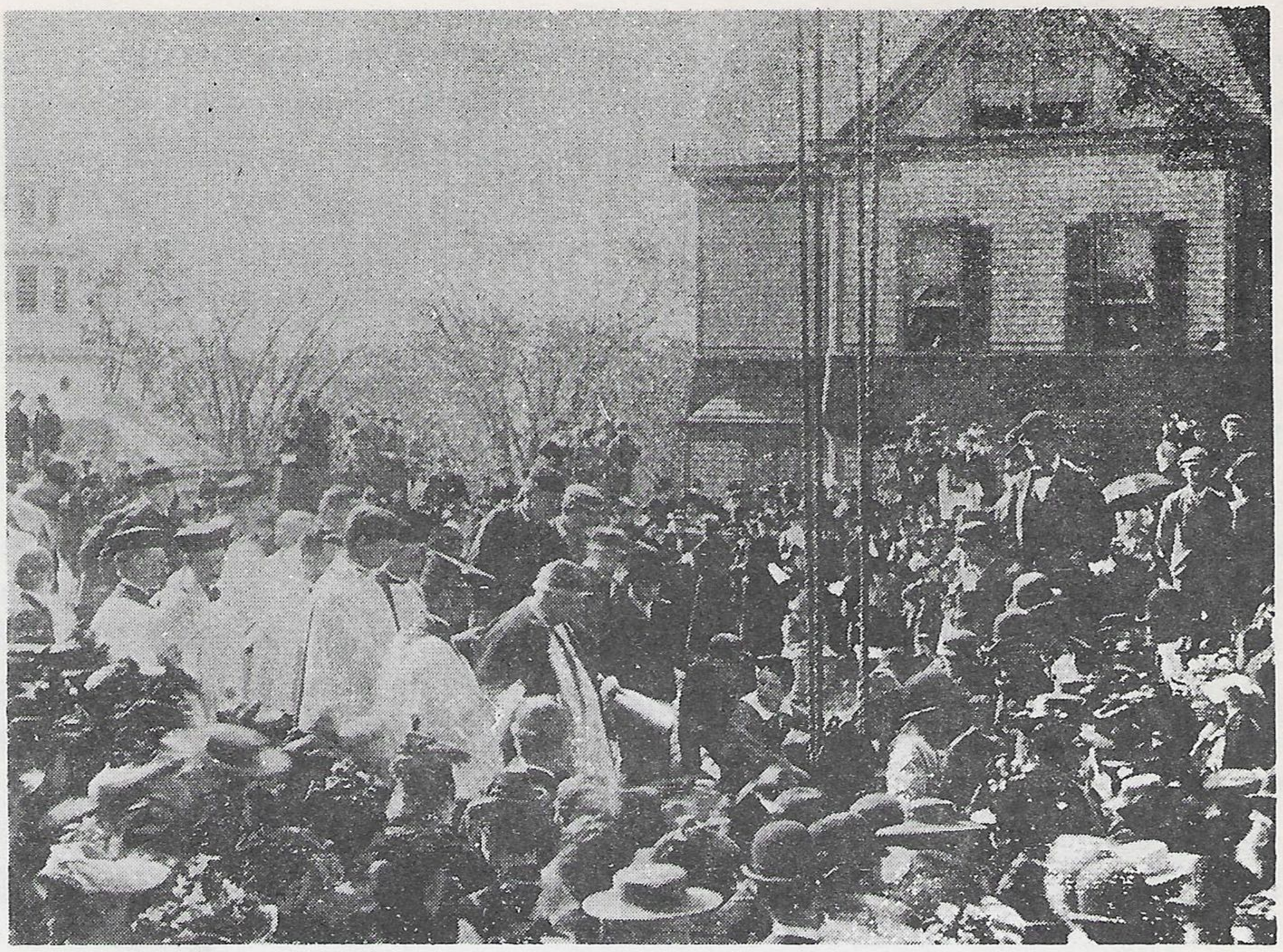
At a vestry meeting held following the parish meeting it was voted to employ an architect to study the possibility of a building on the Schofield lot. The affirmative report of the architect was presented to the vestry on December 15, 1891. All members of the vestry present except one voted to build a new Church.

A motion was made and recorded to make the exchange of property with Mr. Schofield. After much discussion, it became evident that the vestry was not united and Mr. Schofield withdrew his offer.

The minutes of the vestry meeting for May 2, 1892 show that the architects bill for $15.00 was ordered paid and that a committee was appointed to



Laying the corner stone of St. Luke's Episcopal Church with old Rectory in background.



Corner stone laying — Bishop Doane and Clergy

ask Mr. Schofield if he would renew his offer for the exchange of property.

One week later, it was reported that Mr. Schofield would renew his offer and the vestry unanimously accepted it.

On June 12, 1893, it was voted that the church contract with George W. Holdridge to build the church for $29,950.00 provided the work could be done and paid for as the money was collected. The meeting of June 20, 1893 authorized the building committee to sign the contract with Mr. Holdridge.

The cornerstone was laid by the Right Rev. Bishop William Croswell Doane on St. Luke's Day, October, 1893.

The work on the church moved very slowly due to the fact that the vestry was reluctant to mortgage the church property and wanted to pay for the work through contributions received as the work was done.

Some of the progress on the work of the church can be gleaned from vestry minutes.

The highlight of the meeting held on July 24, 1893 was the announcement that the vestry had received a check of $1200.00 from Miss Jane Van Loan to be deposited in the Albany Savings Bank and used for the construction of the Spire.

Plans to borrow $7,000.00 by placing a mortgage on the real property of the church corporation were defeated at the April 18, 1898 vestry meeting.

A resolution was made and seconded to mortgage the church property for $10,000.00.

Before the resolution was voted upon, the Rector urged the vestry to take affirmative action to make it possible to finish the church. He stated that George W. Holdridge had advanced about $3,000.00 of his own money to put the church in proper shape for winter. The Rector said Mr. Holdridge had asked

permission to come before the vestry to insist that the work be carried forward without delay or that the contract be dissolved and a settlement made.

After all this the motion was defeated.

Finally on December 22, 1898, a resolution was adopted authorizing a mortgage on the real property of the church for $10,000.00.

The work on the church then moved rapidly to completion and the first service in the present church was held on June 6, 1899.

The last service in the old church was held on Sunday, June 3, 1899. During the Octave, beginning June 3, 1899 and ending June 11, 1899, there were many services and other events to celebrate the opening of the new church.

The celebrant at the benediction service on June 6, 1899 was the Rt. Rev. William Croswell Doane, Bishop of Albany. Clergymen from Peekskill, Saugerties, Albany, Utica, Rochester, Long Island, and other points, participated in the services. The firemen and many members of fraternal societies were invited guests.

The Catskill Examiner for May 27, 1899, reports on gifts to the new church as follows:

"A striking evidence of the deep and heartfelt interest which the congregation has taken in it's new place of worship is the large number of memorial gifts which have come from those who are or have been closely identified with the church and it's work. Miss Jane Van Loan in memory of her sister, Rachel Van Loan Breasted, gave the Spire, which cost $1500.00, and the handsome oak and brass Chancel rail. The Altar built of Tennessee marble, onyx, and other ornamental stone, at a cost of over $1,000.00, was given by the Rev. Towend G. Jackson, of Flatbush, Long Island, in memory of his father, George Jackson, and is one of the handsomest features of the interior of the church; in the Sanctuary. The Credence and the sedilia are the gift of Miss Mary Selleck as a memorial to her parents; the stalls on one side of the choir were given by the Daughters of the Church, a society composed of the young ladies of the congregation; on the other side, one seat with the desk in front was given by George W. Bates, in memory of his grandson, Harry Deane Bates; the other seat and desk are the gift of Mrs. William R. Childs and her daughter, Mrs. Addison W. Porter. The Altar rail cushion was given by Mrs. Emily Roggen and Mrs. David M. Post; the set of cut glass silver-mounted cruets is a memorial to Madeline Casey and Sarah D. Scott; and the brass alms - receiving basin was given in memory of Josephine Lusk Mapelsden and Charlotte E. Lusk.

The memorial windows are of great beauty. The rose window in the church front was presented by J. Atwater Cooke, in memory of his father and mother; that above the Altar is a memorial to Thomas and Maria Cole. Side windows are in memory of C.C.W. Cleaveland and Mrs. E. D. Boyd.

The five seated stall for the clergy was given by friends of the church. The clergy stall and prayer desk is a memorial to the Rev. Joseph Prentiss, for twenty-one years rector of St. Luke's parish, and was given by the children of his oldest daughter, Caroline Prentiss Sanger; the other desk and stall was the gift of Mrs. Charles E. Nichols and children, in memory of Mrs. Nichols' parents, the Rev. Henry Howard and Eunice S. Bates. The litany desk is a memorial to Robert Harding by his son George S. Harding and the Altar books are offerings of Laura Goodrich Wilcox."

Walton Van Loan, writing in either the Recorder or Examiner, probably the Recorder, for November 19, 1899 said in part:

"The building of the Spire has been watched by hundreds, as the venturesome carpenters could be seen on the frail looking scaffolding, where a false step would lead to certain loss of life. The writer of this article used an opera glass all the afternoon of Saturday, the 12th, and saw the copper cap put over the central and uppermost post of the spire at 4:20 P.M., just as the sun set behind the mountains. This cap is ten feet in length, and on Monday the 14th, the six foot iron cross (gilded) was inserted in this copper bound post at 8:00 A.M. . . . at my request, Mr. Warner, to whom the contractor Mr. Holdridge, let the carpenter work, measured the height from the floor to the top of the Cross, and finds it to be 121 feet making it 123 feet from the ground outside."

The contractor, Mr. Holdridge, was the grandfather of George F. Holdridge, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Catskill Savings Bank.

It seems fitting to quote the following comments of the Examiner and the Recorder concerning the architect and contractor employed in the construction of the Church.

"Praises For The Work

In connection with the opening of the new church, and the many expressions of pleasure which have been called forth by the excellence of its design

Interior of St. Luke's Church, William Street, October 8, 1902. The Church was decorated for the wedding of Addison P. Jones and Annett Whittaker, parents of Ruth Jones Lindsay.

and workmanship, it is interesting to note the interchange of compliments between Architect, H. M. Congdon of New York City, and contractor George W. Holdridge, of Catskill. At the luncheon in Masonic Hall, Mr. Holdridge, during his speech, stated that the architect's drawings were so perfect that scarcely a nail had to be driven except as was there indicated, that not a timber had to be recut or an alteration made. The working drawings had been complete and perfect. Mr. Congdon replied in most complimentary terms, expressing in slightly greater detail, the statement contained in the following letter, which is highly prized by its recipient:"

New York, June 6, 1899

Mr. George W. Holdridge:

My Dear Sir:

Upon the completion of St. Luke's Church, Catskill, I desire to express to you my satisfaction with your work as the general contractor. I believe that you have endeavored to carry into execution the design in its full completeness and that my working drawings have been faithfully followed.

You have worked for the best interests of the church and I am sure that all those interested in it will join me in this statement; and that you have done your utmost, that the workmanship and materials should be the best, that you could offer to the Glory of God in the building of a house set apart for his Worship.

I feel that the building committee is to be congratulated upon your selection in carrying out this enterprise and that it will redound to your credit.

Wishing you all success in your future work, I remain,

Yours very sincerely,
Henry M. Congdon
Architect

"A Thoroughly Conscientious Contractor

Editor Recorder Having been employed by the contractor, George W. Holdridge, to layout and superintend the carpenter work of the new Episcopal Church in this Village, the same now being completed and dedicated, I feel that as a matter of justice to those with whom I have been more or less associated, I should say a few words:

First, that in my long experience in building construction, I know of no contractor who has been more scrupulous in the fulfillment of his obligations to his employers than George W. Holdridge has been in the building of this church. In nearly all building operations there are numerous opportunities for a contractor to slight the work and save dollars for himself, but in this case I can say positively that Mr. Holdridge has taken no advantage whatever, but rather, in some instances, has been over particular.

Second, with reference to the architect, Henry M. Congdon of New York, I will say that I know of none more capable and thorough. Few architects take the trouble to give minute details of every part of a building, as Mr. Congdon has done, and no plans that I have ever seen were figured more accurately than his.

Third, The rector and the Building Committee in the matter of this church have pursued a course entirely different from any others with which I have had

dealings. My experience is that in the matter of a new church, or the alteration of an old one, almost every member of the congregation constitutes himself a committee to find fault and make all the trouble he can, whether there is reason for it or not. Not so with St. Luke's; all have been uniformly considerate and kind, and, in my opinion, have received a much better piece of work than they would have, had they pursued the usual course.

My best wishes to all who have been interested in the building of the new church.

George H. Warner"

The vestry on May 14, 1909, discussed the need of a parish house. On June 7, 1909 a committee was appointed to consult with an architect with regard to plans for a parish house at a cost not exceeding $7500.00.

A resolution was adopted at the vestry meeting of October 14, 1909, directing the vestry to proceed at once to get bids for the parish house to be built according to specifications submitted by H. M. Congdon. The vestry further authorized the signing of contracts for such construction provided the cost does not exceed $10,000.00.

At the November 1, 1909 meeting a bid by Edwin Lampman for $8989.00 exclusive of heating and plumbing was accepted.

The parish house was apparently completed by November 29, 1910, since the annual meeting was held there on that date.

It appears that a new rectory was needed for many years before it was built. At the vestry meeting of February 1, 1907, a letter from the rector was read concerning the condition of the rectory. A motion was then adopted to build a new rectory and a committee was appointed to prepare a letter presenting the matter to the congregation. It will be noted that the rectory was not built until twenty years later.

On March 4, 1926, the vestry again authorized the construction of a new rectory. On April 5, 1927, the vestry accepted a bid of $13,375.00, from Catskill Hardware Company for the construction of a rectory. H. P. Jones Company was granted the contract for heating system at the cost of $1029.00 and for the plumbing at a cost of $1532.00.

We do not find any reference to a date on which the rectory was occupied.

CHURCH FINANCES

On January 25, 1804, the vestry appointed John Blanchard, collector for one year, to collect the amounts of money due the church and agreed to pay him five percent of all the money he collected.

The finances of the church seem to have been at their lowest ebb during 1841, which was shortly after the construction of the second church on Church Street.

The records of the vestry for January 11, 1841 note that Nathan Farrell, the contractor who built the church, had commenced suit against the church for $1100.00. It was stated that said sum was justly due and John Adams, the attorney for the church, was authorized to confess judgment for that amount.

On February 3, 1841, John Adams was appointed a committee to assign an insurance policy of the church to Eli Hutcheson, as security for the payment of a judgment he held against the church.

Again on November 24, 1841, John Adams was authorized "to liquidate existing demands" of the Phoenix Foundry, Peter Breasted, Francis Sayre, and Charles Trowbridge against St. Luke's Church and to confess judgement.

Speaking at the ceremonies, marking the opening of the present church, Walton Van Loan, who had then been treasurer for more than 30 years, recounted some of the financial matters during that time.

The collections in 1841, for three months before the consecration were in full, $10.52. The offerings for the three months prior to the opening of the present church on June 6, 1899 were $524.85 not including rent from pews.

Offerings from April 13, 1841 to April 3, 1869, approximately 28 years, were $27,498.13. Offerings from April 3, 1869 to June 1, 1899 approximately 30 years were $77,037.54. Treasurer Van Loan quoted an entry made on the treasurer's book on July 17, 1869, "paid Jackson Willard (sexton) balance due to May 1, 1869 leaving the church and parsonage entirely free of debt with $6.15 on hand.

Mr. Van Loan goes on to say that during the seven years prior to June 1899, there had been a one hundred percent increase in the offerings and it had been largely due to the fact that the then Rector, Elmer P. Miller, had introduced the envelope system.

A statement dated April 18, 1904, from a five man committee of the vestry to the congregation advised that it had been decided to give up the system of renting pews after May 1, 1904. It was stated that in place of the rental system, pews would be assigned to each family, "which is ready to subscribe to the support of the church in accordance with the blessings received from God". The parishioners were advised that envelopes would be furnished. We see that our present pledge system is 72 years old.

In its 1923 message to the parish for 1924 canvass, the vestry admonished the congregation: "expenses of running the church have increased considerably. Just stop and think what a great deal more it costs to live now than it did ten or fifteen years ago."

It was ever thus.

RECTORS OF ST LUKE'S CHURCH

The Reverend Ammi Rogers - August 24, 1801 - August, 1802

The Reverend Richard Bradford - September, 1802 - May, 1805

The Reverend John Reed - September, 1806 - August, 1810

The Reverend Joseph Prentiss - April, 1814 - August, 1835

The Reverend Joseph F. Phillips - November, 1835 - January, 1844

The Reverend Louis L. Noble - July, 1844 - July 1854

The Reverend Thomas Richey, D.D. - September, 1854 - February, 1858

The Reverend E. Folsom Baker - July 1858 - November, 1859

The Reverend William S. Chadwell - April, 1860 - September, 1867

The Reverend Robert Weeks - November, 1867 - November, 1881

The Reverend William H. Harrison, D.D. - January, 1882 - September, 1889

The Reverend William L. Woodruff - October, 1889 - January, 1891

The Reverend Elmer P. Miller - February, 1891 - September, 1912

The Reverend George Herbert P. Grout - January, 1913 - January, 1921

The Reverend J. Hill Johnson - February, 1921 - August, 1925

The Reverend Walter Edwin Howe - February, 1926 - September, 1944

The Reverend L. Dudley Rapp - April, 1945 - May, 1952

The Reverend Walter R. Strickland - June, 1952 - February, 1956

The Reverend John R. Ramsey - March, 1956 - January, 1963

The Reverend William B. Kennison - March, 1963 - August, 1968

The Reverend Philip B. Gausby - September, 1968 -

Some Rectors of Long Ago

Richard Bradford - 1802 - 1805.

Rev. Bradford was born on April 1, 1752, in Surrey, England. In his early youth, he became a sailor. On May 18, 1788, he was ordained priest at Norwich Cathedral England.

Mr. Bradford left England in 1793 with his wife, Sarah Jeffrey and eight young children, the oldest of whom was 9 years old.

He settled on a farm on Overlook Mountain, Woodstock. He came to Catskill in 1800 and became principal of the Catskill Academy. He was inducted as Rector of St. Luke's Church on September 26, 1802. The first church was built and occupied under his rectorship. In 1805, he resigned his rectorship and went to Canada, where he became one of the most important early missionaries in establishing the Anglican Church in the Ottawa Valley.

Joseph Prentiss - 1814 - 1835

Rev. Prentiss had the second longest rectorship of the parish which was for a period of 21 years and 4 months beginning in April, 1814 and ending in August, 1835. Mr. Prentiss was first rector of the Athens Church and during a period from 1810 on, Athens had shared his services with Catskill. A letter was read to the Vestry on December 7, 1818, stating a possibility of a reduction in his salary due to an unhappy division among the Lutherans at Athens. It was voted to increase his salary to $600.00 per year if he would reside in the parish; otherwise it would be continued at $400.00 per annum.

We wonder about the possibility of a reduction in salary "due to the unhappy division among the Lutherans at Athens". It would appear from this reference that Mr. Prentiss may have served the Lutheran Church in Athens as well as St. Luke's, Catskill and Trinity, Athens.

The children and descendants of Mr. Prentiss were very generous benefactors of St. Luke's. One daughter presented a baptismal font, and established the Hubbel Fund. The grandchildren of the Rev. Prentiss gave to the parish a clergy stall and prayer desk in memory of their grandfather.

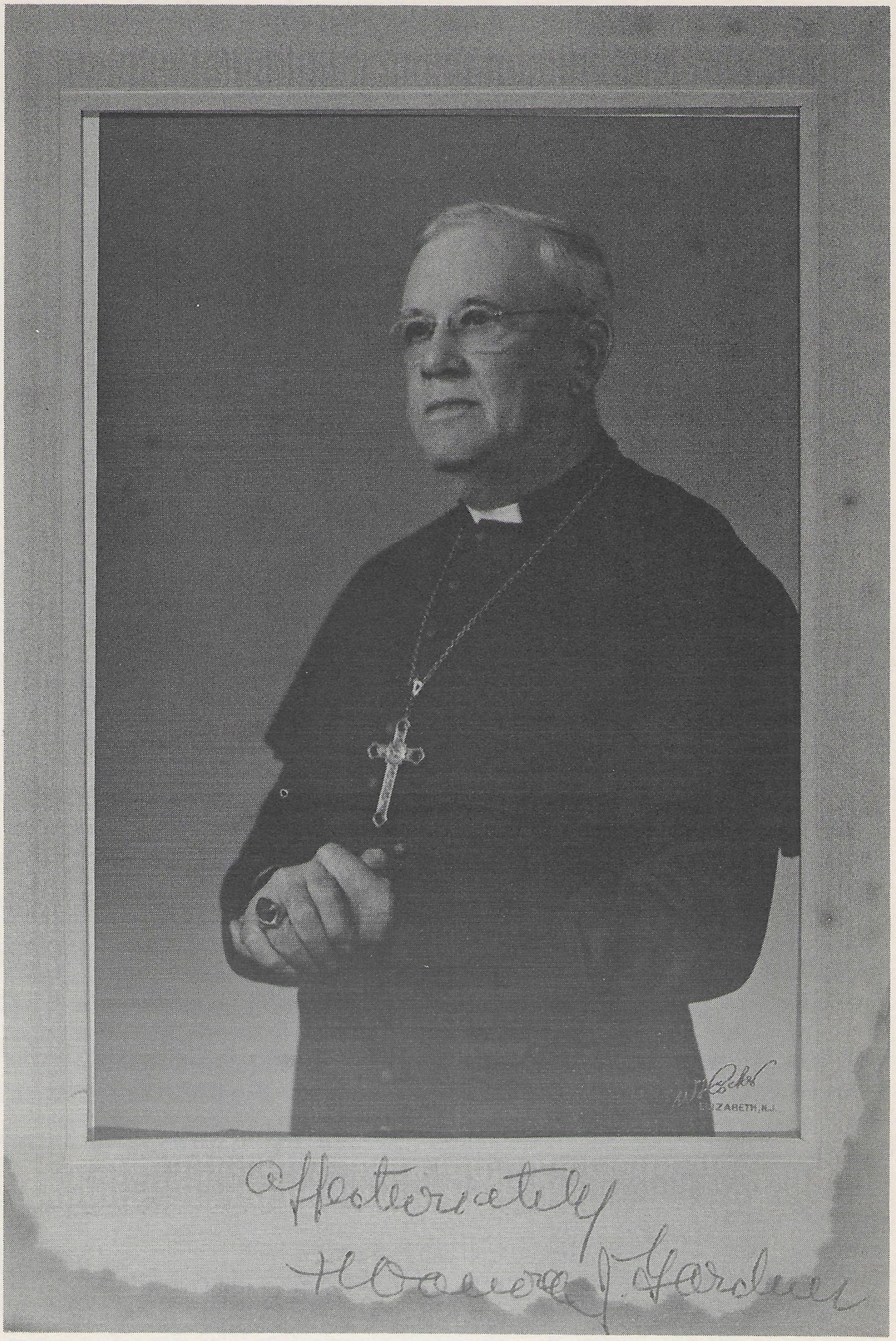
The records indicate that this priest was greatly loved by his parishioners.

One year after he resigned as rector of our parish, he met a violent death when a stage coach in which he was riding overturned near his home in Athens.

The Reverend Thomas Richey, D. D. - 1854 - 1858

Thomas Richey was born in Newry, Ireland on November 1, 1831. He was graduated from Genereal Theological Seminary with high honors in 1854, ordained a deacon the same year and a priest the following year. He served as rector of St. Luke's from 1854 to 1858.

During his administration, the church was damaged by fire, after which it underwent considerable alterations and extensive interior decoration. The records indicate that he was the first Rector to talk of a new church.



Bishop Wallace Gardner, a native son of St. Luke's parish, being brought up in Catskill, became Bishop of New Jersey in 1937.

Rev. Richey's resignation was accepted by the Vestry with sincere regret in 1858. From 1879 to 1902, he was professor of history at General Theological Seminary. Dr. Richey died in June, 1905.

Elmer P. Miller - 1891 - 1912

Mr. Miller became rector of St. Luke's in February, 1891, and he served until September, 1912. His administration was the longest in the history of the parish.

Upon assuming his duties as rector, this priest threw himself wholeheartedly into the task of convincing the Wardens, Vestry and Congregation that they should build a new church. Remember, this subject was first broached by Rev. Thomas Richey in 1854. So successful was Mr. Miller, that the cornerstone was laid on St. Luke's Day, 1893. The physical plant was expanded more during his administration than in any other in the history of the parish. Not only was the present church built, but also the parish house was constructed.

In the month of February, 1906, there was considerable activity in the parish to mark the 15th anniversary of Mr. Miller's induction as rector.

The Recorder for February 16, 1906, contained the following testimonial: "In the time of his present pastorate, there is probably not a family in the parish which has not had occasion to receive from Mr. Miller, and always seconded by his wife, kindness and sympathy and aid far beyond possible repayment or other acknowledgement than deepfelt thanks. In these fifteen years, the clergyman and the clergyman's wife have gone among the poor, the sick, the dying and those who mourned their dead giving unstinted help and ready attempt to comfort. Such offices are not "nominated in the bond" they are sacred memories to unite a minister to those unto whom he ministers."

Wallace John Gardner (Catskill's Bishop)

Bishop Gardner was born July 25, 1883 at Buffalo, New York, the son of Frederick A. Gardner and Sarah J. McConnell. He was a member of St. Luke's, Catskill, during his youth, being baptized and confirmed here. He attended and later taught in the Sunday School and was a member of our choir.

After graduation from Catskill High School, he attended St. Stephens where he received his B. A. in 1906, and his M. A. in 1910.

He was graduated from General Theological Seminary in 1911, receiving the degree of S.T.D. in 1937. In 1938 he received his D.D. at Rutgers and P.D.S. and D.D. in 1939. He was ordained Deacon in April 1911 by Bishop Doane, and was ordained Priest in June 1912 by Bishop Burgess.

He was Chaplain to the House of St. Giles The Cripple; Honorary Canon of the Cathedral of The Incarnation, Garden City, in 1915 and Chaplain of the Cathedral Schools of St. Mary and St. Paul, Garden City, from 1911-1919.

From 1919-1933 he was Rector of St. Paul's Church, Flatbush, Brooklyn, and Vicar of the Chapel of The Intercession, New York City, from 1933-1936.

On June 3, 1936, he was consecrated and became Bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey in 1937.

Bishop Gardner died in the late 1940's or the early 1950's.

BEQUESTS AND ENDOWMENTS

One of the earliest endowment funds which we have is the Hubbell Fund. This was established in the 1870's by one of the daughters of Joseph Prentice, a former rector. The principal amount is $3,000.00 and the income therefrom is paid to the rector.

David M. Post bequeathed our church a large amount under his will in 1921 which was transferred to the General Account in 1927 and 1929. This fund exceeded $20,000.00 and was used to reduce the church and rectory mortgages and complete the rectory, 1929.

Lydia Hollenbeck bequeathed our church an estate exceeding $13,000.00; the Vestry applied $7,000.00 to rebuilding the organ and the remainder to the mortgage, endowment fund, modernization of the kitchen and memorial windows in the year 1949.

St. Luke's Church and a number of other religious and charitable organizations received bequests under the will of Lola J. Sherman, 1936. Our church received $17,298.79 to be invested. Under the terms of the endowment, the income only is available for the parish.

This endowment is recorded on a bronze plaque on the south wall inscribed, "Endowment of Lola J. Sherman in Commemoration of my niece, Grace Leila Sherman Greene, her mother and father - Dr. Louis Greene and Alice R. Sherman Greene.

St. Luke's Church, Catskill received as a bequest under the will of Julia Drake Heaslip of Keokuk, Iowa, the sum of $25,000.00 in December, 1953. This amount was one-eighth of the residuary estate as distributed to various religious and charitable organizations.

In her girlhood while living at Catskill, she was a devout member of St. Luke's Church. Mrs. Heaslip passed away leaving the life-interest of her estate to her devoted friend and companion, Elsie L. Ruffer, also of Keokuk.

On the death of Miss Ruffer on August 26, 1963, the estate, which had become considerably enhanced by her capable management, was distributed under the provisions of the will of Julia Drake Heaslip.

The parish of St. Luke's will long remember both Julia D. Heaslip and Elsie L. Ruffer as women of great christian faith and unselfish devotion to our church.

In addition to the initial amount, Miss Ruffer left to our church a portion of the residue of Mrs. Heaslip's estate amounting to $3,406.22, together with an additional bequest of $6,393.53 of her own, for a total of $34,799.75. This amount has been used to make capital improvements to the church property since 1963.

Many other bequests have been given over the years by individuals during their lifetimes and by former parishioners under their wills at their death. These have all been used for worthy purposes and have enabled the various vestries to keep the church properties in good condition.

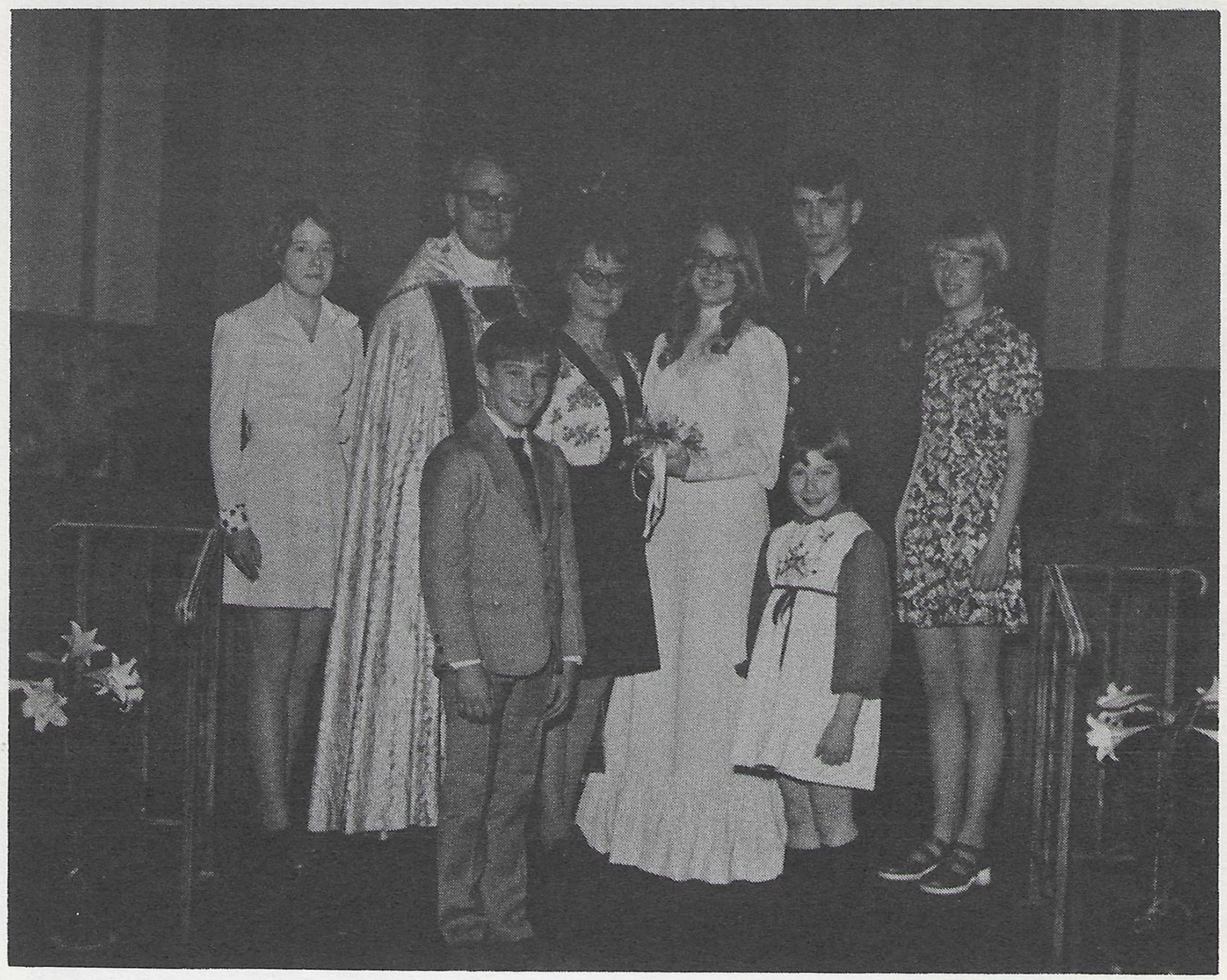
MORE RECENT TIMES

The church has been blessed with a series of five fine, energetic rectors beginning with L. Dudley Rapp in 1945. During this time, much has been done to improve and preserve the church property. The parish house has been divided into class rooms, the parking area has been black topped and enlarged, new pews have been installed, a new organ has been purchased, the church has been redecorated. Memorial Chapel has been added.

The church has been very active during this period. Each of the rectors has been a fine spiritual leader. The church today is in a very healthy condition. We have a predominantly young congregation and a core of dedicated church persons.

We have had very many dedicated laymen in our church. One of the outstanding ones has been the late George W. Bagley. He was very active in church organization, in fund raising, in sponsoring a number of hobby shows and he did a magnificent job in editing, consolidating and preserving church records. This history relies heavily upon his "Book of Remembrance" and on the historical data compiled by him.

Interior of St. Luke's Church taken May, 1969, showing the renovations of new pews and the carpeting.



Mary, The Rev. Philip B. Gausby, Gretchen, Linda Gausby Hacker, Craig Hacker, Susanne, David and Brenda.

The Gausby family have lived in Catskill and served at St. Luke's for the past eight years. Father and Gretchen have shared their warmth, concern, understanding and dedication with all the parish family.

Praises For The Work

The Reverend Philip B. Gausby, Rector
Secretary - Nancy Miller
Treasurer - Mildred Peterson
Financial Secretary - James Gregg

VESTRY

Earl Snell
Harold Scott
Raymond Shanks
William Stark
Fred Carl
Arthur Rood
Floyd Prince
Eugene Schnare
Marion Springle
Carl Peterson
James Gregg

Clerk - Harvey Young

SUPERINTENDENTS OF CHURCH SCHOOL

Joseph Pratten
Mary Marsters

Financial Secretary - Mary L. Stark

BI-CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Nancy Miller

LAY READERS

Douglass Thorpe
Joseph Pratten
Richard Angelo

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

President - Grace Schnare
Vice President - Alma MacEwen
Secretary - Muriel Young
Treasurer - Helen Ward

EPISCOPAL YOUNG CHURCHMEN

President - Lorri Scott
Vice Pres. & Secy. - Laura Snell
Treasurer - Kathy Miller
Historian - Mary Gausby

ALTAR GUILD DIRECTRESS

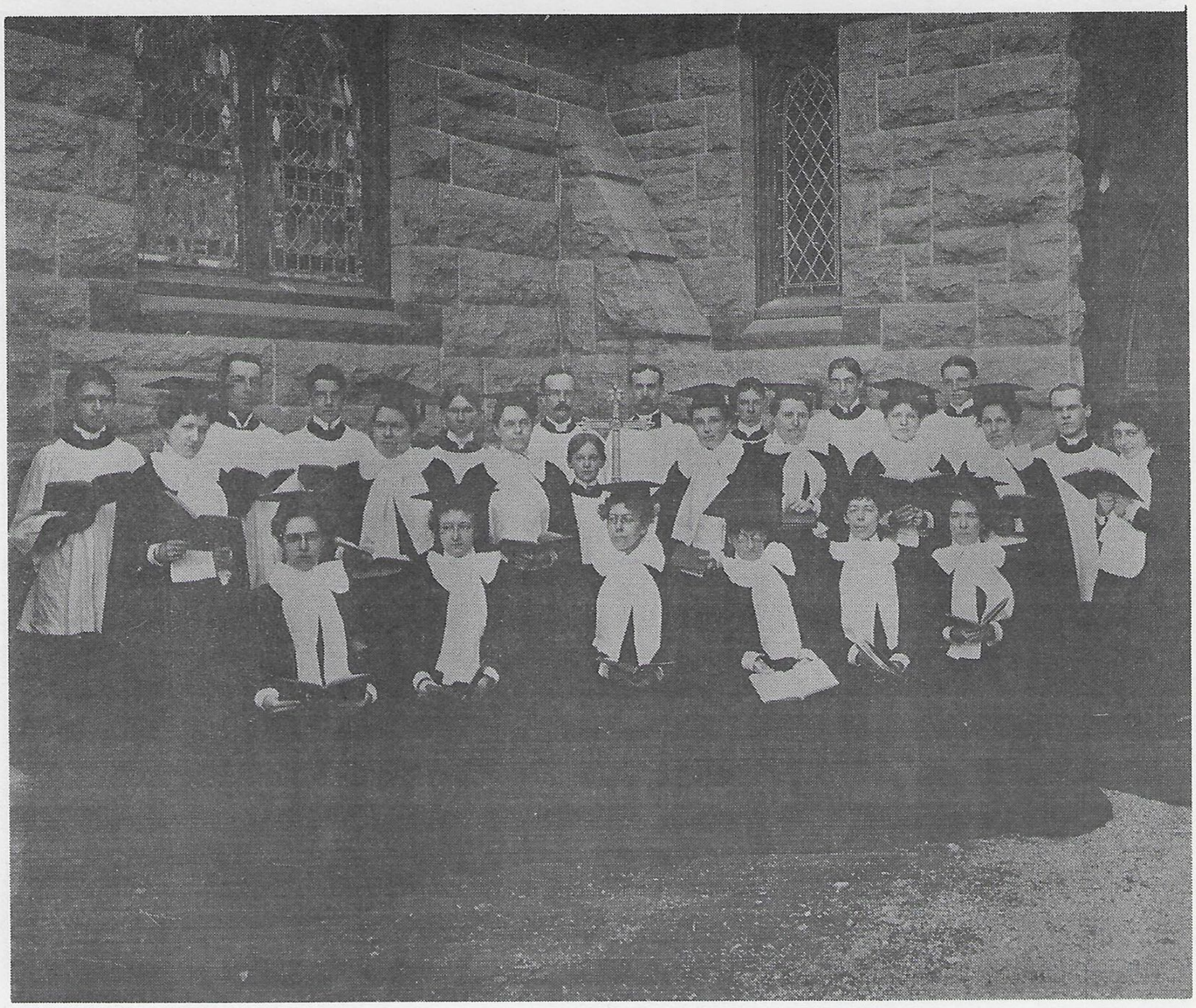
Nancy Scott
Muriel Young

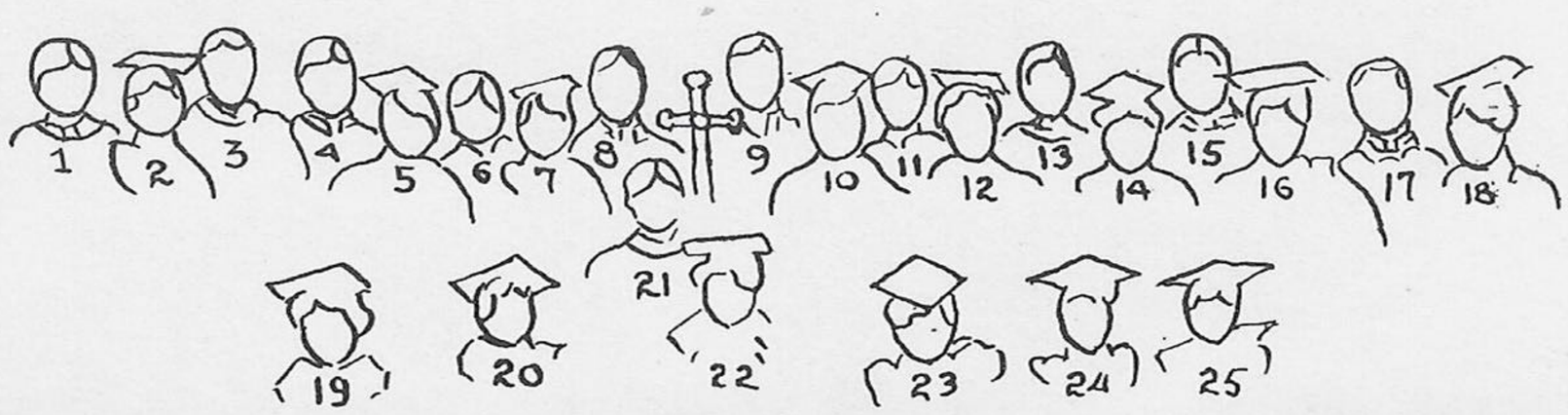
ORGANIST AND CHOIR DIRECTOR

Susan Ward

The Consecration of St. Luke's Church with The Right Reverend Frederick Barry, Bishop of Albany, May 29, 1949.

The Consecration of St. Luke's Church May 29, 1949, with Father Dudley Rapp and Father John Ramsey officiating.





1. Edgar Washburn
2. Mrs. Grace St.John Clermont
3. Desmond Nelson
4. Wallace R. Gardner
5. Miss Molly Selden
6. Chas. Bert Deer
7. Miss Sarah G. Leffingwell
8. Charles G. Coffin
9. Rev. Elmer P. Miller
10. Miss Gertrude R. Gardner
11. George Gardner
12. Mme. K. L. Defossez
13. Gilbert L. Jones
14. Mrs. Elizabeth Childs Porter
15. Chester F. Craigie
16. Mrs. Mae Wilkinson
17. Edward G. Boyd
18. Miss Katherine Livingston
19. Miss Mabel Vincent
20. Miss Alice Hughes
21. James Hughes
22. Miss Kate E. Lusk
23. Miss Kate Casey
24. Mrs. Ione L. Jones
25. Mrs. Mary Gray Mallory.

St. Luke's Choir 1891 to 1899

CATSKILL ENTERPRISE